

No matter how many times I read the charter of this commission I do not find anywhere that you are directed to take apart a fishery with little regard for economic or social impact. I spent several days reading about many of you on the internet to try for a better understanding of what motivates you. I find you all have consistently and commendably fought for ecologies, environments and natural resources. I know that the Chesapeake Bay watershed is in dire need of your expertise and help. We watermen have been in need of your help too. I did fail to notice anywhere in all the information about you, any evidence of social advocacy.

Nowhere are you on record as having put consideration for human beings alongside science. You mask this by claiming your environmental advocacy is for the betterment of the planet which will benefit humanity. Unfortunately you feel that has absolved you of the need to consider the human impact of your actions. Science has been used to mask motives before when crafting such final solutions.

For all of your discipline many of you are inconsistent when it comes to your understanding the people your actions will impact. You are quick to take as reality the stereotypes foisted on you by special interest groups, such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Coastal Conservation Association and Maryland Saltwater Sports Fishermen's Association. The ultimate evil is that you take these cartoons and act on them as if they are cut-in-stone truths.

I know this commission started out with the idea that an oyster moratorium was the best solution. Moratoriums are not the actions of enlightened, self-interested people. After some input from other sources, you discarded that notion.

Then the plan for dredge/shell was put forth and most of you fought that. What many fail to remember is that what was called a "put-and-take" fishery actually kept oysters in the Bay. After some thoughtful presentations you have come to regard the dredge/shell idea as important to the recovery of the oysters. The shell would benefit all concerned. We, oystermen, fought for the permit to be renewed in the state legislature. You did nothing as you did not wish to offend special interest groups who still oppose the plan. Now, we have a permit and the 90/10 split makes it appear that you want it all for oyster sanctuaries.

Initially you seemed to be pro-aquaculture. Your recent actions say otherwise. We support the idea of a transition period from the public fishery to the aquaculture stage of the oyster industry. We do this, understanding that shared responsibility is good economics. Aquaculture is not only economically beneficial but environmentally responsible. As a social responsibility it attracts investment capital. I ask, "Is this commission guilty of "green-washing" its anti-public fishery stance and its foot dragging on aquaculture?"

Quoting from a recent issue of Smithsonian, "There is not a person in business anywhere, who gets up in the morning and says, Gee I want to race right into the office to follow some regulation."

On the other hand if you say, "There is an upside potential here, "You, watermen, are going to make money," These men will get up early and drive themselves even harder around the possibility of finding themselves winners on this.

Good stewardship is good business. Isn't aquaculture good stewardship? The power of the market to create public benefit should not be overlooked. I ask you this – is the potential for everyone to win on this permit too much for you?